

VZCZCXRO0668
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHNM #0302 1180752
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 280752Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4978
INFO RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 3507
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0816
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RUEHLMC/MCC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS NIAMEY 000302

DEPT FOR AF/W, AF/RSA, AND DRL/EA
ACCRA ALSO FOR AF/WA
PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHER
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/W

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [NG](#)

SUBJECT: Former PM Hama Amadou released from prison; receiving care in France

Ref: a) Niamey 00252, b) Niamey 00227, c) Niamey 00163, d) Niamey 00214, e) 08 Niamey 00632

¶1. On April 23, the High Court of Justice approved the provisional medical release of former Prime Minister Hama Amadou from prison, where he had been detained since June 26, 2008. Amadou, who faces corruption charges, left Niamey on April 24 to seek medical care in France. The High Court has stated that he will face a hearing as soon as his health status improves; Amadou was hospitalized from March 12 - April 2, due to hyperglycemia, apparently aggravated by hypertension (Ref A). Furthermore, his attorneys had requested his evacuation to the American Hospital in Neuilly, France, in early April (Ref B).

¶2. Hama traveled in long motorcade of supporters from Koutoukale prison to his residence, where hundreds of people - family, friends, party fellows, and journalists - were waiting for him in festive spirit. Hama told journalists that he was happy to be free; he stated that his detention conditions were difficult, and he would not want to see even his enemies held under such conditions. "I now understand the full meaning of human rights," he said. Asked if he would continue his political activities, he said, "A politician is a politician for life." When questioned about the "Tazarce" plan (Hausa for "let it continue," a reference to appeals for President Tandja to remain in office beyond the December 2009 end of his mandate), he responded, "Right now, I am still under court orders, so I will refrain from making any political commentary."

¶3. Minimize considered.

Allen